Numb. CIII.

The GUARDIAN.

Dum flammas Jovis, & ſonitus imitatur Olympi. Virg.

Thurſday, July 9. 1713.

I Am conſidering how moſt of the great *Phænomena*, or Appearances in Nature, have been imitated by the Art of Man. Thunder is grown a common Drug among the Chymiſts. Lightning may be bought by the Pound. If a Man has occaſion for a Lambent Flame, you have whole Sheets of it in a handful of Phoſphor. Showers of Rain are to be met with in every Water-work; and we are informed, that ſome Years ago the Vertuoſo's of *France* covered a little Vault with Artificial Snow, which they made to fall above an Hour together for the Entertainment of his preſent Majeſty.

I am led into this Train of Thinking by the noble Fire-work that was exhibited laſt Night upon the *Thames*. You might there ſee a little Sky filled with innumerable Blazing Stars and Meteors. Nothing could be more aſtoniſhing than the Pillars of Flame, Clouds of Smoke, and Multitudes of Stars mingled together in ſuch an agreeable Confuſion. Every Rocket ended in a Conſtellation, and ſtrow'd the Air with ſuch a ſhower of Silver Spangles, as opened and enlightened the whole Scene from time to time. It put me in mind of the Lines in *OEdipus*,

Why from the bleeding Womb of monſtrous Night
Burſt forth ſuch Myriads of abortive Stars?

In ſhort, the Artiſt did his part to Admiration, and was ſo encompaſſed with Fire and Smoke, that one would have thought nothing but a Salamander could have been ſafe in ſuch a Situation.

I was in Company with two or three fanciful Friends during this whole Show. One of them being a Critick, that is, a Man who on all Occaſions is more attentive to what is wanting than what is preſent, begun to exert his Talent upon the ſeveral Objects we had before us. I am mightily pleaſed, ſays he, with that burning Cypher. There is no Matter in the World ſo proper to write with as Wild-fire, as no Characters can be more legible than thoſe which are read by their own Light. But as for your Cardinal Virtues I don't care for ſeeing them in ſuch Combuſtible Figures. Who can imagine *Chaſtity* with a Body of Fire, or *Temperance* in a Flame? *Juſtice* indeed may be furniſhed out of this Element as far as her Sword goes, and *Courage* may be all over one continued Blaze, if the Artiſt pleaſes.

Our Companion obſerving that we laught at this unſeaſonable Severity, let drop the Critick, and propoſed a Subject for a Fire-work, which he thought would be very amuſing, if executed by ſo able an Artiſt as he who was at that time Entertaining us. The Plan he mentioned was a Scene in *Milton*. He wou'd have a large Piece of Machinery repreſent the *Pan-demonium*, where

——— *from the Arched Roof*
Pendent by ſubtle Magick, many a row
Of ſtarry Lamps, and blazing Creſſets, fed
With Naphtha *and* Aſphaltus, *yielded Light*
As from a Sky ———

This might be finely repreſented by ſeveral Illuminations diſpoſed in a great Frame of Wood, with ten thouſand beautiful Exhalations of Fire, which Men verſed in this Art know very well how to raiſe. The Evil Spirits at the ſame time might very properly appear in Vehicles of Flame, and employ all the Tricks of Art to terrifie and ſurprize the Spectator.

We were well enough pleaſed with this Start of Thought, but fancied there was ſomething in it too ſerious,

(Price Two Pence.)